



NEWS RELEASE

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Release Number: 13-10-03
Date: Dec 10, 2013

T-38C Talon, T/N 61-0891 ACCIDENT INVESTIGATION COMPLETE

JOINT BASE SAN ANTONIO-RANDOLPH, Texas – Air Force officials announced today the accident investigation results of a July 19 T-38C accident at Sheppard Air Force Base, Texas.

The investigation determined the mishap was due to a bird strike that shattered the T-38C Talon canopy, which sent fragments through the number two engine causing engine failure. The shattered canopy also significantly increased the aerodynamic drag of the mishap aircraft.

An additional cause was related to actions of the mishap pilot attempts to return to base. After the bird strike, the instructor pilot executed a turn that increased drag on the aircraft robbing it of badly needed airspeed and lift which caused the aircraft to enter into an unrecoverable stall. The pilot delayed ejection as he attempted to avoid flying over the city of Wichita Falls, Texas.

The mishap instructor pilot and student pilot, assigned to the 80th Flying Training Wing, were executing a planned touch-and-go, simulated single engine approach training exercise when the aircraft sustained the bird strike.

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Both pilots safely ejected from the aircraft, suffering nonlife-threatening injuries. There were no fatalities or significant damage to civilian property. The loss of the aircraft cost approximately \$8 million.

Col. Joseph M. Rizzuto served as the president of the Accident Investigation Board. He is assigned as the 306th Flying Training Group Commander at the U.S. Air Force Academy, Colo.